

# etc.



City College of San Francisco · Fall 2007

Danny Glover  
Actor, Activist, Alum

Murder of an  
Imam's Son

Homeless for  
the Weekend

A Taste  
of Reality

Fashion  
Statement

Summer  
of Love

Addicted  
to Food

# Department of Journalism

City College Of San Francisco  
spring 2008 journalism classes

50 Phelan Avenue, Bungalow 214, San Francisco  
[www.ccsf.edu/departments/journalism](http://www.ccsf.edu/departments/journalism)

## Jour 19: Contemporary News Media

3 units	MWF	9-10 a.m.	Phelan Campus, ArtX 185
3 units	T	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1125 Valencia St., Rm. 217

## Jour 21: News Writing and Reporting

3 units	MWF	10-11 a.m.	Phelan Campus, HC 213
3 units	W	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1800 Market St., Rm. 306

## Jour 22: Feature Writing

3 units	R	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1125 Valencia St., Rm. 218
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## Jour 23: Electronic Copy Editing

3 units	T	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1125 Valencia St., Rm. 218
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## Jour 24: Newspaper Laboratory

3 units	M W F	12-1 p.m.	Phelan Campus, Bngl 214
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## Jour 26: Fundamentals of Public Relations

3 units	R	6:30-9:30 p.m.	1125 Valencia St., Rm. 217
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## Jour 29: Magazine Editing & Production

3 units	M	6:30-8:30 p.m.	1125 Valencia St., Rm. 218
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## Jour 31: Internship Experience

2 units	Exp	Hours Arr	Phelan Campus, Bngl 214
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## Jour 37: Intro to Photojournalism

3 units	T R	9:30-11 a.m.	1125 Valencia St., 217
3 units	W	7-10 p.m.	Phelan Campus, HC 213

FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER BOYD / ETC

Front Cover Photo: City College alum Danny Glover relaxes after promoting a film at the Lumiere Theatre on a recent visit to San Francisco.

Back cover photo: A model struts down the runway at the 2007 Macy's Passport Fashion Show. Students from City College dressed and prepared the models.

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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

*We're all rushing forward, ready to pounce on life's next adventure. Sometimes we forget life isn't only tomorrow — it's today and it was yesterday, too. Here's a snapshot of City College, Fall 2007:*

### Forty years ago, the Haight-

Ashbury swelled with an influx of young people carrying revolutionary ideas. A few aging hippies take Stephanie Witherspoon on a journey to the past.

**After four years of active military duty,** Eddie Falcon tells Ben Taylor how he's fighting a new battle at home — this time to end the war.

**Homelessness used to hold an allure** for Alex Dixon — until he spent 48 hours sleeping in parks and eating at soup kitchens. He shares his experience, and his new perspective.

**Bob Offer-Westort, development coordinator** for the Coalition on Homelessness, says all human beings deserve respect. T.J. Johnston explains what Bob is doing to give poverty a voice.

**Danny Glover talks with Rebecca Brassfield** about attending City College and growing up in San Francisco during the civil rights movement. Several City College instructors, share their own memories.

**Ali Shahin was gunned down** last September in Hunters Point. Ali's family and friends tell Stephanie Rice how the murder has shocked the Muslim community.

**Deia de Brito introduces us to** a motley crew of Mission Creek houseboaters, who have persevered through sinking boats, polluted water and the incessant clanging of nearby construction.

**The fashion department provides** real-world experience. Department chair Diane Green talks with Crystal Bass about how it all started.

**Students in the hospitality** program run the show at City College's fine-dining restaurant downtown. Sunny Owen takes us behind the scenes.

**Breast cancer runs in Melissa Repogle's family.** In a first-person account, she searches for answers about her own fate.

**After a lifetime of binges** Karen Kinney knew she wanted more for her life. Karen shares how she lost 200 pounds and fed her soul.

**Ashwin Sodhi brings us up to** date on several alumni, including murdered basketball captain Terrell Anderson, the infamous O.J. Simpson and former Police Chief Fred Lau.

*... So until your next class starts, or you get to your bus stop, or it's time to go back to work, take a few moments to focus on now and relive yesterday.*

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Droves of peace-loving people flocked to Speedway Meadows in Golden Gate Park Sept. 2 to remember the Summer of Love.

## Reliving the city's psychedelic past

It's early morning in the Haight, moments before the fog lifts and the stores slide back their metal gates. Espresso machines in coffee shops hiss and screech. Street kids lounge in alcoves. Someone strums a guitar.

At the corner of Cole and Haight streets, two men are trying, unsuccessfully, to map the past.

"I think it was here, man."

"No, no. The leather store was way down the street."

Roger Wieler and Martin Amos are here for the 40th anniversary of the Summer of Love. They're not alone. About 50,000 others have descended on Speedway Meadows in Golden Gate Park.

Wieler and Amos have returned to a street that now looks part ghost town, part theme park, save for the faint sound of a drum circle playing in the distance.

It must seem like a sharp contrast to the street they remember.

In 1967, tens of thousands of longhaired kids flooded the Upper Haight in search of like minds, good music and hallucinogenic drugs.

Martin, now 58, came here when he was 18 almost by accident. A kid from Boston who'd traveled the country, he decided to enlist in the Army and go to Vietnam.

"I wanted a choice in where I was sent," he says. "And I wanted to kill people."

He arrived at a Los Angeles recruiting office in early March 1967 and was told that, due to his delinquent past, he would have to wait a week for the Army to review his enlistment papers. But Martin didn't dig the Southern California scene. When a kid he met told him about this really groovy place called the Haight-Ashbury, he hitched a ride and arrived the next day.

The Haight that summer was mind blowing, yet instantly familiar — like inhabiting the lyrics of a psychedelic song. Hippies loitered on every corner. Pot smoke and incense filled the air. It was a place of elevated conversation, radical dissent and artistic freedom. It was both squalid and sublime.

The 40th anniversary of the Summer of Love, which culminated in September, was a journey into the heart of that past — that short-lived, romanticized and derided time of the hippie.

"Diamond" Dave Whitaker, a 70-year-old City College student, lived in the Haight during the '60s. He was — and still is — a hippie at heart.


Sounding like Wavy Gravy on speed, he speaks in a mumbled stream of consciousness that breaks into sudden crescendos of catch phrases and Beat poetry.

He's a small, impish man with long gray hair that flares out from under his floppy hat. He's wearing a faded pair of jeans and a bright red T-shirt with bold white letters that

read, "Ask Me." A well-worn, peach-colored polyester overshirt is unbuttoned, revealing a pendant hanging around his neck that commemorates his years of sobriety.

Diamond Dave arrived in San Francisco in 1957 after reading an article in *The Nation* by Rex Roth titled "The Mature Bohemians." He left college in Minneapolis to become a hobo, live free and join the Beats.

"In those days, it was McCarthyism," he says. "Very tight, you know. I wanted to get away from the regular ones." Like many of his generation, his words are coded with counter-culture meaning. An elusive speech

In 1967, tens of thousands of longhaired kids flooded the Upper Haight in search of like minds, good music and hallucinogenic drugs. 

pattern functions like a secret nod between the initiated. Sometimes you have to fill in the blanks.

This much is clear — he hitchhiked west and landed in North Beach.

"I remember standing in front of City Lights Books and they had just won the "Howl" trial, back when Ferrilngetti was running the store," he says. "It was much smaller then just the front room, and I used to sit in the spiral staircase and listen, because everybody was talking about what was happening. It was just a handful of people who were changing history — and hipstory."

He knew Ginsberg and Cassidy, and was there in Mike's Pool Hall when Kerouac got the news that his book, "On the Road," would be published.

Diamond Dave took a break from San Francisco in the early '60s to live on a kibbutz in Israel. He traveled around Europe and briefly returned to Minneapolis in an attempt to buckle down. It was around then that he met Bob Dylan, whom he claims to have turned on to radical politics and the Beats.

"He was an empty vessel," Diamond Dave says. "I gave him a copy of Woody Guthrie's autobiography and said 'You gotta read this,' because he didn't know anything."

Diamond Dave returned to the city in '65. "When I got back I could see things were different. People were letting their hair grow, letting their freak flag fly, and just living much more wild."

At the time, the Haight was a lower-middle-class white neighborhood with dime stores and cheap clothing shops.

"It was just a few houses of people like us," he recalls. "We'd run into people out on the street and we could see that we were on the same kind of trail, but we'd be surprised. It went from a trickle, to a stream, to a mighty torrent, to — Judas Priest! Where did they all come from?"

People started congregating at a huge Victorian at 1090 Page St., where Chet Helms, Janis Joplin and members of Quicksilver Messenger Service hung out.

The Diggers, an anarchist group, formed the skeletal support system of the Haight. Dave worked with the

Diggers to provide crash pads, free food, free clinics and a store of free, recycled goods for newcomers. The Diggers funded their operations through a complex system of welfare checks, odd jobs, scavenged goods and drug money. Their money-free society worked for a while, but the Haight gradually started to approach critical mass.

In '67, the population in the neighborhood reached its peak. For many, the Summer of Love marked the beginning of the end. It was only a few months later that the Diggers held the "Death of the Hippie" event in the Haight.

"The vultures had arrived, and the commercial element came in," Diamond Dave says. "That's when people decided to flee the city."

He recalls the great flight of the Haight's hippies as nearly apocalyptic. The vibe was teetering between revolution and paranoia, and members worried the city was going to implode,

if not from sheer numbers, then from the harder drugs coming onto the scene by 1970.

Diamond Dave describes the Haight back then as a war zone. The free store was long gone. Most of the storefronts boarded up, and a pall crept into the empty, labyrinth rooms of the old Victorians lining the streets. It was here,



PHOTO BY CECILIE ANN MEDINA / ETC

City College student "Diamond" Dave Whittaker, lived in the Haight during the first Summer of Love in 1967.

on the corner of Haight and Clayton streets, that Diamond Dave happened upon a long procession of buses — 60 in all — headed in mass exodus to the Farm in Tennessee with Stephen Gaskin.

Diamond Dave knows the world has changed. He's a student at City College now and serves as vice president of cultural affairs. He organizes student groups for various cultural events. He's a connector, and it's this spirit of the '60s that he and his generation exude.

E-mail Stephanie Witherspoon at [srbwithers@yahoo.com](mailto:srbwithers@yahoo.com).



## ★ From the Frontline to the Picket Line

Iraq vet fights to end the war

by Ben Taylor

PHOTO BY NINA ROBINSON / ETC

Student Eddie Falcon joined the anti-war movement after returning from two tours of active military duty in the Middle East.

The wind is howling through the city, whipping between the skyscrapers, catching old newspapers and sending them flying. Women hold their skirts down as they walk briskly between buildings, while people make their way up and down Market Street. At Burger King, near the entrance to the Civic Center BART station, a small crowd of young protesters is gathering.

The group, City Students Against the War, is a club of about 10 City College students who meet Thursdays on the Ocean campus. In a few minutes, they will walk five blocks to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office in San Francisco's Federal Building to demand an end to the Iraq war.

Eddie Falcon, a member of the group, is mingling with other protestors. He usually wears pants cut just below the knee, a T-shirt with a punk band logo, and slip-on Vans. But today, Eddie is impeccably dressed: shiny black leather shoes, black cargo pants neatly ironed with a crease down each leg, a black dress shirt and a tie.

He's not content to simply picket in front of the Federal Building. He plans to confront Pelosi in her 14th floor office. He wants her to explain why she hasn't represented her constituents' views on the war, leaving nearly 4,000 American troops dead and close to 30,000 seriously injured in the past four years. He hopes to bring at least 25 people with him to stage a sit-in inside Pelosi's office. But the first obstacle is getting through the front doors.

"There are already some people out there," he says, as he sucks down a lung full of cigarette smoke. A girl in a miniskirt smiles at him as she passes. "Are you nervous

yet?" she asks playfully, and it's clear that he is. He's just gotten word that there are cops, FBI and even Immigrations and Customs Enforcement officers on the scene. The direct action may have to be called off.

What separates Eddie from most of the protestors at the fall rally is that he has experienced the war firsthand. He served four years in the Air Force as a C130 loadmaster, transporting troops, supplies and prisoners from point A to point B in what he calls "a garbage can with wings."

He was sent to Iraq and Afghanistan for two four-month tours, but now, at the age of 24, he is out of the Air Force and studying music and Spanish at City College.

"I don't regret my time in the military," Eddie says, "but I'm not proud of it either. I learned a lot, and I got to see the world."

Despite going to school and working security at Café Du Nord and the Great American Music Hall, he still finds time to attend weekly anti-war meetings on campus.

Eddie also serves as vice president of the San Francisco chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War, a national group founded in 2004 that also represents active military personnel. Eddie's military credentials bring credibility to the student anti-war movement.

"I'm not a lobbyist," he says. "I don't think that talking to Nancy Pelosi will change anything."

Although he knows that it's a long shot, he's fully prepared to get arrested in the attempt. He just hopes that the news cameras are rolling when it happens.



When he was in his early teens, Eddie used drugs, and some of his friends were in gangs. By 16, he wanted something more. When he told his parents that he was going to join the military, they were supportive.

The year was 2001. Eddie was in basic training when the Twin Towers were hit by two passenger jets. Weeks later, he was at an airport in Baghdad, smoking a Cuban cigar that he had purchased at the Air Force base. Heading back to his plane he heard a hollow sound, like a blow-pipe. Suddenly there was a flash and an explosion just a few feet from his plane.

The airport was under attack. As hangers exploded around him and people ran for cover, Eddie just stood there. He was being shot at, but somehow it didn't seem real. Over the next four years he would become accustomed to attacks like this.

"I supported Eddie when he joined the military because at the time he thought it was the right thing to do," says Eddie's mother, Flora Falcon, from her home in La Puente, Calif.

Though she is not against the war, Flora wants the troops to come home, and backs her son's anti-war activ-

At his home in the Mission district, Eddie leafs through a pile of photographs on the kitchen table until he finds the one he is looking for. It's a close-up of a young black woman cradling her infant in her arms. They are both looking into the camera with sorrowful eyes. "These are the people that they left behind," he says. There is a heavy silence for a moment. "That really pissed me off."

Down the hall in his bedroom, a dog-eared box of military medals gathers dust under the bed. Lost among piles of clothing on his closet floor are a flight helmet, bayonet and piece of armor. These, along with a stack of snapshots, are all the keepsakes he has from his Air Force days.

His idea of going up to Pelosi's office isn't working out. Though Eddie is dressed for the occasion, most of the crowd looks out of place among the suits and shiny shoes at the Federal Building. Some of the protesters are walking around with mohawks, wallet chains, piercings and studded jackets, carrying picket signs and chanting. There is no way they'll make it past the cops in the lobby, let alone the metal detectors.

They continue marching in a circle, chanting: "Nancy! Nancy! You can't hide! Cut the money! Take a side!"



"I supported Eddie when he joined the military because at the time he thought it was the right thing to do. ... I supported him then, and I support him now. ... He is doing what he feels is right." — FLORA FALCON, EDDIE'S MOTHER

ism. "I supported him then, and I support him now," she says. "He is doing what he feels is right."

During his four years of active duty, Eddie escaped injury and did not lose any friends, but he saw the way that civilians and prisoners were treated on a daily basis and he didn't like what he saw.

Having to transport prisoners, shackled and blindfolded, to detention centers, and seeing people treated as less than human helped shape Eddie's anti-war stance.

"I spoke to an MP one time, and he told me that most of the people we were transporting were just regular civilians," he says. "They just busted into people's homes and arrested them."

Then, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, and Eddie was deployed to the New Orleans area for two weeks. After his military tours, of the Middle East he saw an opportunity to help at home.

Rescue and relief helicopters and planes flew in and out of New Orleans steadily throughout the time Eddie was there. He saw tons of food and supplies delivered, most of which gathered dust in storage warehouses. On rescue missions, he picked up people and transported them to safety. But he also saw those who were left behind.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EDDIE FALCON

At boot camp in 2002.

Soon, the protestors enter the building but make no attempt to go further than the lobby. Inside, the chanting continues. The police are patient for a while but eventually ask them to leave. No one is cited, and within 15 minutes, the protestors leave peacefully.

The rally is over. Maybe Nancy Pelosi will get the memo. Probably not. The news vans don't show up until everyone is leaving.

Eddie's not discouraged, though. This is the first action he's organized, but it won't be the last. For him it's just one day in a continuing effort to stop the war.

Forty years ago, students were protesting the Vietnam War. According to a 2007 CNN poll, 61 percent of Americans oppose the war.

Despite that, today's anti-war movement has failed to have the impact of the '60s peace movement.

Eddie Falcon is confident that the Iraq anti-war movement will grow. "Things are starting to change," he says after the rally.

"War tears apart communities and only benefits the elite," he adds. "I'm trying to speak out and encourage people to do something about it."

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# Predisposed to Breast Cancer

by Melissa Replogle

A student copes with a heightened risk due to family history

PHOTOS BY NINA ROBINSON / ETC

Four women in Melissa Replogle's family have had breast cancer. At 27, Melissa is unsure about what her own future holds.

When I went in for my first mammogram a year ago, a hospital technician instructed me to strip from my waist up, put on a paper gown with an opening in front and wait for the radiologist. As I sat in front of an X-ray machine, the nurse instructed me to place my breasts onto a glass plate. She warned me that it might be cold. As a vice-like paddle lowered onto my breast, she said I might feel intense pressure. When the paddles pressed down to take the X-ray, it felt as if my breast tissue was being squeezed through my nipples.

Breast cancer is the second-leading cause of death among American women. More than 175,000 cases are reported each year, resulting in 40,000 deaths. Usually, women are not advised to get a mammogram until the age of 40. On average, a woman under 35 has only a 12 percent chance of getting breast cancer during her lifetime.

But because both of my grandmothers died of breast cancer, and because my mother and cousin were diagnosed at a young age, I decided to have a mammogram at 26.

Each of my mother's four sisters have the BRCA gene, a hereditary mutation. It means they have an 85 percent chance of getting breast cancer. The risk increases when there is history on both sides of the family.

"When you find out you have the gene, you're faced with a hard choice," one of my aunts told me. "Either you wait for the cancer to find you, or you remove your entire chest in prevention. It's hard to determine whether or not you can part with something that so fundamentally makes you a woman."

Only two to four of every 1,000 mammograms results come back irregular, and only 8 to 10 percent of those require a biopsy. Eighty percent of biopsies are benign, according to the National Cancer Institute. My family fits into the other 20 percent.

"You better get tested for the gene before you find out too late," my mother said.

I remember being in my grandmother's room, at age 11, watching death for the first time. The curtains



were closed, and the room was dark. One dim lamp cast a glow on her bald, wrinkled scalp. Dozens of freckles peeked through the thin scarf around her head. Tubes invaded her body. Nurses took turns giving her injections and checking her life support. She had been this way for almost six months. At 65, my grandmother was barely surviving her second and last bout with breast cancer.

Seven years after my grandmother's death, I accompanied my mother to the hospital every month. I watched as she was stuck with a needle and a tube was inserted into her arm. A neon liquid streamed into her body, sending chemicals to destroy both healthy and cancerous cells. Throughout the year, each chemotherapy treatment weakened her a little more, in hope that new, healthy cells would regenerate.

Initially, a doctor told my mom her lump was nothing to be concerned about. She sought a second opinion.

"When I went to your grandmother's doctor, I found out I had to have surgery within the week. The cancer was spreading — fast," my mother told me. "I remember thinking, 'Who the hell gets breast cancer at 34?'"

Within weeks of the first session, every hair on her body fell out. When the clumps began to clog the shower drain, she had me shave her head. We stood outside on the lawn, and the clippers vibrated in my hands as I raked them over her scalp. Her locks fell onto the grass, covering my feet. I wondered if she would still smell like her jasmine-scented shampoo after she was bald. I was glad she didn't turn to see my tears. Being the oldest, I had to stay strong. I had three sisters to take care of. None of them could see me weak.

I watched fat and muscle melt away from my mother's body as I took my turn helping her bathe. Her lone right breast sat next to a long scar over a flattened rib cage. I had to use Q-tips and a special antiseptic to clean around her draining tubes and under her armpits. As humiliating as it may have been for me, I can only imagine what it felt like for her.

Before my mother's hair had a chance to grow back, we received news that my cousin also had breast cancer.

"I was in stage two already, like your mom," my cousin explained. "If I had waited longer to see the oncologist, I may not have survived." She was 28.

In the United States, women ages 30 to 39 only have a .44 percent chance of getting cancer. Most breast cancer is found in women over 50. However, the age of diagnosis has gotten progressively lower in my family.

A week after my mammogram, I received the test results by phone. I was prepared for the worst. My hands started to sweat, and my heart was pounding.

"Miss Replogle, though the test results came back negative for irregularity, the mammogram was a bit inconclusive," the doctor said. "Since you are so young, and the breast tissue is so dense still, we recommend an ultrasound to be 100 percent sure."

Seeing the financial and emotional effects of cancer, I worry that I may become the next victim. Just as frightening, I'm concerned because I'm uninsured. Since I was 18, I have been self-administering breast exams. With the narrowing gap between my age and the age of the cancer victims in my family, I decided to research my options.

The office at the health center on City College's Ocean campus is set up as a standard medical room: sterile white walls, tissue-covered bed, appropriate sanitized items closed in clear jars under a row of locked cabinets. While I sat waiting for a referral, I reviewed my list of all the things I wanted to tell the nurse about my history.

The nurse was quite blunt after hearing my story.

"All I can give you is a referral. Normally, we send students to the UCSF Cancer Center, but since you don't have insurance, it's nearly impossible to be seen there."

She told me to see someone at the Avon Breast Center at San Francisco General Hospital.

"This will be your best bet," the nurse said. "They might work on a sliding scale."

I could have called the center immediately and scheduled an appointment. But was I ready to face the results? "You're prodded with questions and needles, slathered with jelly and dissected, just to see if you have a problem," my cousin recalled. "Then to be told you actually have cancer . . ."

I don't know how I would handle that kind of news while going to school and working full time. I'm getting married soon, and I'd rather focus on my future. I still haven't made the call.

E-mail Melissa Replogle at [melissa\\_replogle@yahoo.com](mailto:melissa_replogle@yahoo.com).

A week after my mammogram, I received the test results by phone. I was prepared for the worst. My hands started to sweat and my heart was pounding.



# A Taste of Reality



PHOTOS BY ERIN REAGAN / ETC.

An elegant dining table awaits guests.



by Sunny Owen

## Students learn the joys of cooking at the Educated Palate

Alicia Cacdac stirs a pot of broccoli, red pepper and cheddar chowder on a blackened industrial stove.

"I love everything that food has to offer," says the former print production sales rep. "It brings people together, it introduces you to cultures."

"Big deals are made over food, you know? People meet over food. Food to me is more than just cooking. It's the whole cultural thing."

Nineteen-year-old Devron Jones' hopes of getting drafted by the NFL ended in 2005 when he was shot in the head.

"You know how they tell you to always choose a backup plan? Cooking was my backup plan," he says. "I've always been into food, ever since I was little."

Larry Jones, whose black scarf, gold earring and tiny braids give him the look of a cheerful pirate, has cooked in restaurants for years. He recently decided he wants a formal culinary education.

"I'm learning the terminology, and the right methods for cooking different things," he says. "There's moist versus dry cooking, different kinds of fats, health issues. Although I know a lot, there's always more to learn."

Insulated from the noise and traffic at Fourth and Mission streets, the Educated Palate's urban modern dining room offers a serene space for lunch. It also houses the fine-dining laboratory for City College's noncredit culinary and service skills training program.

The two-semester certificate program, one of several hospitality programs available at City College, allows students to get hands-on restaurant training in both management and cooking. Students spend the first semester in the front of the house, learning skills such as waiting tables, hosting and bartending. They move to the kitchen during the second semester, taking on jobs like line cook, butcher and sauté cook.

What sets City College's program apart is that tuition is free. In San Francisco, every other culinary program charges a fee, sometimes tens of thousands of dollars, to learn the hospitality business. At the Educated Palate, students get the chance to operate a fine-dining restaurant five days a week and pay only for equipment, books and uniforms — a total of about \$250 per semester.

In June 2007, SF Weekly took a close look at another San Francisco cooking school, the California Culinary Academy. The paper reported that CCA students spend 15 months and \$47,000 on tuition, leaving many with huge debts, unrealistic goals and \$10-per-hour jobs.

"We give students a real introduction to what it's like, which is a huge advantage we have in contrast to other culinary programs," says Educated Palate management instructor Chris Johnson. "You're working in a fine-dining restaurant every day. It's not a couple customers one night a week, or one day a week — it's every day."

Student Susan Chan, a former Federal Reserve financial analyst says, "I can't imagine why more people don't do this. Everyone's dream is to go to culinary school. The level of instruction here is amazing — and it's free."

Downstairs in the kitchen, the hissing roar of compressors underlies the metallic clatter of steel pans

on steel countertops, a tinny counterpoint to the rhythm of knives chopping, ice cubes tumbling and a phone that blares jarringly. Over this cacophony, students and teachers plan, conter and prepare the meals that will be sold in the restaurant above them.

A professional kitchen is built for hard work: racks of shelves stacked with breads, spices, produce, tools; huge stoves and ovens darkened with use; and unforgiving florescent lights.



Student Ivy Hong brushes croissants with a buttery glaze.

"The level of instruction here is amazing, and it's free." — SUSAN CHAN



A sweet treat prepared by baking students: Boston cream pie topped with chocolate, whipped cream and maraschino cherries.





Decadent desserts, from left to right: an individual apple pie, cheesecake topped with berries and a slice of Boston cream pie.

Only six weeks into the semester, students appear to know exactly what to do without any direction at all. Chef instructor Maureen Kellond makes the rounds, offering comments, directions and encouragement, but on the

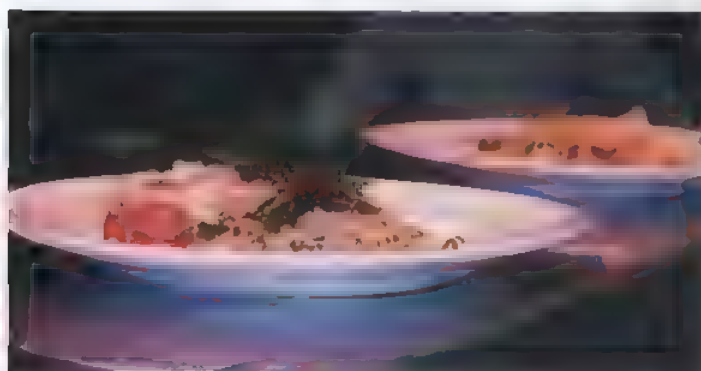
A man attending a conference at the Moscone Center sounds excited to dine here despite the wait.

"Remember," he tells his companion, "these are students. ... It's the best deal in town. They even say so on the cooking channel."

Patricia Shenk of La Jolla, Calif., says, "I really like the enthusiasm of the waiters and waitresses. Maybe they

"We give students a real introduction to what it's like, which is a huge advantage we have in contrast to other culinary programs."

— CHRIS JOHNSON



Dishes are warmed under heat lamps in the kitchen, waiting to be delivered to guests in the dining room upstairs.

whole, students seem to be working on their own. "This is one of those days that I don't need to be here," she says.

The dull roar of the kitchen gives way to the quieter chaos of a full dining room upstairs. The Educated Palate has a line out the door and a 20-minute wait. Some people look annoyed, but most seem happy to stand there while students in neckties and white button-downs do their best to accommodate everyone.

aren't polished but you can tell they want to do a really good job. Where else can you find something of this quality at these prices?"

At the Educated Palate, a lunch of pear, escarole and Gorgonzola salad with walnuts and maple vinaigrette, plus an entrée of grilled mahimahi with miso chive butter, edamame red rice and grilled mango, costs only \$17.50. A comparable meal down the street at Annabelle's Bar and Bistro costs almost twice as much.

Quick and calm service is evident in the dining room, where water is poured, bread offered, orders taken and plates removed with studied efficiency. Downstairs, chef

Kellond keeps things moving on the line. After Laura Benedict assembles the meals, Ling Zou, quiet and focused, wipes the edges of each plate, adds a cover and ferries them to the dumbwaiter. Walkie-talkies and computer-printed tickets facilitate communication between the two floors.

"The cooking and service philosophy at the Educated Palate is grounded in classical French technique," management instructor Chris Johnson explains. "However, we are extremely current, and that's not true at every culinary program. A lot of times you're making food like grandpa made — more cream! more butter! — and people don't eat like that anymore."

Johnson describes the menu at the Educated Palate as California cuisine, for its focus on very fresh and, when possible, organic or sustainable foods. International cuisine is also emphasized, reflecting the program's diverse student

body and trends in the wider food community.

Just six weeks into their second semester, several students have jobs waiting for them.

Chef Kellond says more and more businesses are recruiting employees from the program. "City College has a really good reputation," she says. "Potential employers experience the restaurant and like it. Then they come down to the kitchen and see what's going on."

Back upstairs, patrons enjoy the fruits — and salads, and desserts — of students' labor. "Compliments to the chef," a woman says on her way out the door. "The salmon was perfect."

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"It's the best deal in town. They even say so on the cooking channel." — PATRON



Students at the Educated Palate manage the front and back of house operations at the restaurant. Clockwise from top left: Working in the kitchen, putting finishing touches on a cake, checking in with patrons, showing off culinary masterpieces.



# The Many Sides of Danny Glover

by Rebecca Brassfield

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER BOYD / ETC

Danny Glover returned to San Francisco last year to promote a film about burdensome national debt in many parts of Africa.

## From Hunters Point kid to Hollywood star

At a recent screening for one of his latest films, Danny Glover kneels on a front-row seat at the Lumiere Theatre and addresses 200 of his fans. His salt-and-pepper mustache is more salt than pepper. So are his sideburns. The rest of his hair is hidden under a black baseball cap, which he lifts from time to time to scratch his head.

The “Lethal Weapon” star and City College alum is here tonight to talk about “Bamako,” a film he produced about Africa’s struggles. It’s a subject he’s passionate about.

Holding a cordless mike in one hand, Glover speaks to his audience as though they are friends gathered around a dinner table. In between answering questions, he shovels popcorn into his mouth.

His voice sounds gravelly and his eyelids look heavy. He appears tired, and for good reason. He’s a busy man. Seems like everything he does these days — from his prolific Hollywood career, to his social and political advocacy, to the company he keeps — garners attention.

This past year, he’s appeared in several films, including “Dreamgirls,” “Barnyard,” “Bamako,” “The Shaggy Dog,” “Poor Boy’s Game,” “Shooter” and, most recently, “Honeydripper.” If you include all the movies he’s

directed and produced, plus his TV appearances, the list grows longer.

Lots of Hollywood celebrities adopt causes. But, for Glover, it’s a way of life. It’s why he got into acting.

Although he’s a popular film star, not everyone agrees with his politics. His friendships with controversial world leaders like Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, Cuba’s Fidel Castro and Haiti’s Jean-Bertrand Aristide, have put him at odds with the Bush administration and its supporters.

Despite opposition from his detractors, a lot of people admire his courageous stand on issues. There was even a recent grass-roots movement to recruit him as a candidate for mayor of San Francisco, which he declined.

“Real change happens on the outside,” says Glover, who prefers limiting his political activities to campaigning for others, such as presidential candidate John Edwards.

Most people know Danny Glover the actor, director, producer and social activist. But few know the other Danny Glover — the San Francisco native who wasn’t always famous. The kid who went to Washington High, City College and San Francisco State. The guy whose political activism started at an early age.



A handful of City College instructors and old friends knew that Danny Glover.

Robert Soller, who teaches African American studies at City College, directed Glover in a play in the '70s and thinks of him as a renaissance man.

"Lethal Weapon made it possible for him to do other things," Soller says.

Between his film and social commitments, Glover is constantly on the go. Carl Lumbly, another longtime friend, says, "He is living two existences. Danny goes faster than anybody I know. Over the past week, he's been in Brazil, Belgium, Indiana and Los Angeles."

Although Glover is known for his involvement in social and political causes, he objects to being called an activist.

"I try to be a better citizen," he says via cell phone on his way to an Arizona airport late last year. "Too often we try to dilute activities by anointing them with the term, 'activism.' If we try to be the best citizens we can be, then we're already activists."

In addition to serving as goodwill ambassador for UNICEF, he champions education, worker rights and the plight of Africa's people. He's also concerned about AIDS, poverty, war, the death penalty and racial discrimination.

Born in San Francisco on July 22, 1946, Glover was the oldest of five children. When he was growing up, his parents, James Glover and Carrie Hunley, worked for the post office. The family moved from Hunters Point to the Haight-Ashbury when he was 10. He still owns a home in the neighborhood.

Carol Belle-Thomas Moss, a resource instructor in City College's media center, met Glover when they were students at Roosevelt Junior High School. They both attended George Washington High School.

Their paths have crossed several times since then in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Moss says his

Glover transferred to State in '67 and joined the Black Student Union.

He got involved in the BSU's effort to establish a school of ethnic studies. When the school refused, students and faculty protested for five months, the longest student strike in U.S. history. Eventually, the administration approved the school. The program was the first of its kind in the country.

"I remember Danny very distinctly battling the police," says Roberto Rivera, who taught Mexican philosophy at State during the strike and now teaches in the College of Ethnic Studies. "The police charged. Danny resisted. He was jumping from one fight to another, very agilely and rapidly. He was defending himself."

One of Glover's heroes at the time was heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali, who had been drafted into the Army in '67 during the Vietnam War, but refused to serve because it violated his religious beliefs.

"He articulated our rebelliousness," Glover says. "He was my voice and the voice for so many other young people."

"If you're a child of the civil rights movement, then the things that you're engaged in are in some sense connected to activism, especially for a city that's known historically for its activism," he says. "As children of that moment, we were brought into another kind of existence, so whether or not we participated in it, we were immersed in it."

Dan Gonzales, who participated in the strike and teaches at State, says protestors didn't always agree on every issue.

"Danny Glover was a real diplomat," he says. "He would sit people down if there was a conflict. He always kept it at a level of principle and peace. He kept his eyes on the immediate and long term goals."

Years after the strike, they ran into each other at Lakeshore Elementary, where Glover's daughter, Mandisa, attended school with Gonzales' children.

"If I had joined the service,  
something else might have  
happened in my life."



success hasn't gone to his head.

"He's always been modest," she says. "What's really molded his character is the kind of route he's taken to become this world-famous person."

Glover never dreamed of being a movie star. "If I had joined the service, something else might have happened in my life," he says.

After graduating from high school in '64, Glover attended college here.

"City College made me feel like I was part of an educational process. In '65, it was a whole other kind of world out there. You wore wing-tip shoes and three-piece suits. It was a major departure from high school."

"Danny sat there and I swear he didn't get up from that chair for four hours," Gonzales recalls. "He was signing 8-by-10 glossies and working his ass off, raising money for the school."

Mandisa, who works in the film industry in New York, is Glover's only child with his former wife, Asake Bomani, whom he met in college.

After earning his bachelor's in economics, he drove a cab and worked for the federally-funded Model Cities Program under Mayor Joe Alioto, organizing social services for low-income residents in the Mission district. The program also benefited Hunters Point.

At the same time, he continued to hone his acting skills,



## Creating Change through Art

*Glover's body of work reflects his commitment to social causes. Here's a selection of his movies. They might be entertaining, but there's also a serious message beneath the surface.*

Places in the Heart (1984)  
 The Color Purple (1985)  
 Mandela (1987)  
 Lethal Weapon series (1987-1998)  
 A Raisin in the Sun (1989)  
 Bopha! (1993)  
 Buffalo Soldiers (1997)  
 Beloved (1998)

UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors Berhane Adere, Danny Glover and Kenenisa Bekele are welcomed to an Ethiopian village with flowers in 2004. Glover was there to encourage participation in an HIV/AIDS education program.

training at places like Jean Shelton Actors Lab downtown.

Shelton's daughter, Wendy Phillips, met Glover there. At a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards ceremony 30 years ago, Glover was to be honored for his role in a play called "The Island," Phillips recalls.

Just before the award presentation, Glover parked his cab in front of Bimbo's 365 Club in North Beach. He came and sat down just in time, Phillips says. "They announced his name, he accepted his award and made a speech. Within five minutes, he got back into his cab and drove away."

Gloria Weinstock, chair of City College's theater department, met Glover around the same time.

"My real daughter and I played sisters, and Danny played our dad," she chuckles. Later, Glover and Weinstock played a romantic couple in a two-person play at the Julian Theatre on Potrero Hill.

Weinstock remembers the day he quit his job with the city after deciding to pursue acting full time.

"I was standing on the corner of Haight and Masonic. He stopped his car in traffic, got out, ran over to me and said 'Girl, I just quit my job!' Then he ran back to his car and drove away."

It was a turning point.

"He had seen it, committed to it, and the universe gave it to him," Weinstock says.

When Glover's in town, they run errands together. They visit family. They go to dinner at places where he won't draw attention. They've even spent Christmas together.

Glover and Weinstock perform in a 1976 play.



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
 RICHARD REINECCIUS

Glenn Nance, who teaches African American studies at City College, used to work the sets and lighting on local plays in which Glover performed during the mid-'70s. Nance opens a manila folder and pulls out a Guardsman clipping yellowed by age. It's a review of a South African play Glover performed at City College in 1978.

Around the time of the play, Nance ran into him on West Portal. "Danny was feeling kind of discouraged about his acting career," Nance recalls. Glover told him he had bills to pay and needed work. Nance says, "It was very unusual, especially for a black person, to have the opportunity to make a film." The next time he saw Glover was in "The Color Purple."

Glover never abandoned his commitment to social causes, even after he became a commercial success with "Lethal Weapon" and its sequels. "That's how we pay the rent," he told Nance. It's also how he can afford to pursue the issues that are close to his heart.

"I'm surprised he's been as much of an activist as he has," Nance says. "He's maintained his profession as well as being concerned with things going on in the community and the world."

But his outspoken opinions about politics and social issues have come with a price.

"You have to be kind of careful if you start taking a position, speaking out against different things," Nance says. "He's lost part of his audience."

Glover, who is now 61, has appeared on the cover of AARP Magazine. He also became a grandfather a few years ago. He occasionally takes his grandson, Adesola, with him on trips.

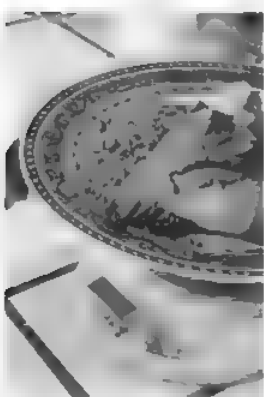
"An immediate goal for me is to try to help raise my grandson and create change," says Glover.

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by Karen M. Kinney

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER BOYD / ETC



## How I lost 200 pounds and regained my dignity

Above: Karen leads an exercise class at 24 Hour Fitness in Marin.

Left: She controls her portions by using a digital scale.

Fifteen years ago, I realized I had a problem. I was up to 250 pounds, smoking pot every day and binge drinking. I needed help.

I was addicted to pot and alcohol, but food was my main drug of choice. Most people would not consider food a drug, but for me it is. It's called food addiction.

More than 72 million Americans — about 34 percent of adults — are obese, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbid obesity begins with a body mass index of 40. At 5 feet 3 inches and 250 pounds, my BMI was around 50.

It's not just about how you look. Being extremely obese

can cause a number of health problems, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes. It can kill you.

Of course, I didn't believe that it could happen to me. But I knew I needed to lose weight.

I began by going to 12-step meetings for food addiction but continued to use. Every day was a struggle. Although the meetings were giving me hope, encouragement and the tools I needed to overcome my addiction to food, I was still miserable. I kept promising myself I would not binge — that I'd control what I ate, when I ate and how much I ate. But no matter how hard I tried, the guilt would return after the first bite. It was a repetitious cycle of overeating, feeling guilty, gaining weight and relapsing. This went on for almost 10 years.

I ate because I didn't like myself, and I didn't like myself because I ate.

By 1996, I weighed 325 pounds. I tried to go to my Spanish 1 class in Cloud Hall, but I couldn't fit into the

**I ate because I didn't like myself, and I didn't like myself because I ate.**

desk chair. I was so humiliated, I stopped going to school.

My relapsing continued until the night of Feb. 9, 2001. On my way home from jury duty at 2 in the afternoon I drove down to Geary Boulevard and Third Avenue, stopped at Burger King, and ordered a Whopper, two large



fries and an extra-thick chocolate shake. Back in the car, I started on the first bag of fries and drove to Geary Boulevard and 16th Avenue, where I ordered a large sausage and mushroom pizza and a 2-liter bottle of Diet Coke at Domino's. Next door, at Rite Aid, I bought a pint of Ben & Jerry's cookie dough ice cream, a large bag of Cheetos, and Pepperidge Farm Milano cookies. I piled my stash in the car and headed home for another night of binging.

When I got home, I laid out my spread on the coffee table, smoked a bowl, turned on the TV and unplugged the phone. I finished everything I bought by 6 p.m., but I couldn't stop eating. I started to ransack through my cupboards and refrigerator. I ate everything I could find. By midnight I was so sick I thought I was going to vomit.

I called my friend-in-program, Adrienne, and left a distraught message. I had hit bottom. I was crying out for help.

At 6 a.m. the next day, I woke up and called my sponsor. I hadn't eaten yet, and I needed some support. She suggested an 8-ounce serving of plain nonfat yogurt, a Fuji apple and an ounce of hot oatmeal. At first, it felt good to be eating healthy food. But by 11 o'clock, I wanted to binge again.



Karen teaches spinning and weightlifting. She encourages her students to push themselves as far as they can go.

falling to the pavement, unconscious. The handlebar ripped open my right inner thigh. My sister, who was riding on the back of the scooter, flew about 20 feet and injured her right knee. Before I left home, I had snorted some cocaine. I was lucky to be alive, but my first thought was that I needed to hide the drugs.

## Changing my life was not easy. One of the sayings that helped was, "Don't quit before your miracle happens."

As I sat on my apartment floor, terrified, I realized that to escape this nightmare I needed to abstain from using food as a way to cope. I immediately called my sponsor and other members of my 12-step program. I prayed and went to a meeting, where I was reminded to live life one day at a time. My journey had begun.

I wasn't always overweight. I played volleyball and ran track in high school back in Kansas City, Mo. I didn't start gaining until my senior year. That's when my father tried to bribe me to lose weight. He offered me \$20 to lose 10 pounds in two weeks. I ate boiled chicken and grapefruit for a week. I lost the weight, collected my winnings and thought I had solved the problem.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KAREN M. KINNEY

For years, Karen would smile to keep her pain hidden.

That same year, in 1984, I moved to San Francisco. Four years later, I was involved in a motor scooter accident.

An oncoming taxi struck me at the intersection of California and Laguna streets. I flipped over the handlebars and landed on the hood of the cab before

The wound in my leg got infected and required surgery. I was bedridden for seven months. That's when I gained my first 70 pounds. I couldn't work or go to school.

As my weight increased, I was overwhelmed by everyday tasks. Riding Muni was embarrassing because I took up two seats. I prayed no one would try to sit next to me. It was emotionally painful to go clothes shopping with my girlfriends. I was a size 24 and had to do my shopping at Lane Bryant, while my friends went to Gap and Banana Republic. When we went out to clubs, men would flirt with them. I was ignored. Eventually it became easier to spend my nights alone with my binge food to comfort me. One by one I pushed my friends and family away. I was lonely, and frequently cried myself to sleep.

I hadn't had a boyfriend since high school. I felt I couldn't confide in anyone, so intimacy was out of the question. As the years passed, I didn't face the reality of my addiction. I was in denial.

Family members and close friends were sympathetic for a while, but they felt helpless. My mother, who also struggles with her weight, suggested various diets.

"You never talked about your weight problem in realistic terms," she says. "I knew you wanted to lose it, but you were always fooling yourself."

My close friend, Rose, was watching me self-destruct. It saddened her to see me in so much pain.

"I felt sorry for you," she says, "because I knew you could be so much more."

Even my sister's frustration and embarrassment wasn't enough to stop me. As a nurse, she was concerned about

my health, but like most family members of addicts, she didn't understand why I continued to hurt myself. "I was embarrassed for you," she says.

For the next 13 years, from 1988 to 2001, I held a string of menial jobs, working as a customer service rep, receptionist and waitress. None of them lasted long. I quit, didn't show up or was fired. I watched from the sidelines as friends graduated from college and got promoted to management positions.

I could not admit I had a problem with food. I thought I simply needed to have stronger willpower. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I didn't see a fat woman. I thought if I could just get my act together and lose the weight and go to school, I would be happy. My denial even affected my ability to pay bills on time, and my credit cards were maxed out.

By the time I turned 35 in 2000, I felt like I had lived a lifetime. On July 3, 2001, my father was killed in a car accident on the Golden Gate Bridge. The grief was overwhelming. It was my first test. Suddenly, I couldn't eat. Food, marijuana and alcohol did not work anymore. After hitting bottom in February that year, I started to attend meetings regularly. Five months of abstinence had cleared my head and lightened my heart. It was working.

I began my journey by following a food plan, which prohibited flour, processed sugar and snacks. I started reading the ingredients on labels and began eating fruit, protein and vegetables. I committed to eating three portions a day.

For lunch and dinner, I ate four ounces of protein, six ounces of vegetables, six ounces of salad and a piece of fruit. I did not exercise for the first year. I just concentrated on sticking to the plan.

When I had a craving, I paused, drank water, made a call to someone in my 12-step program, and waited for the feeling to pass. I was amazed that it worked every time.

I lost 200 pounds in three years and came down eight dress sizes. At 5 feet 3 inches tall, I still maintain my weight at 127 pounds. I am now a size 6. My dignity and self-esteem have returned.

After being immobilized for years by my insecurities, I decided to face my fear of failure and started taking classes again at City College. I realized it was time to complete my college degree. I finally had the clarity, and the courage, to pursue my dream of becoming a journalist.

Besides enjoying college, I love being active. Four years ago, I started riding my bike again, through the Richmond district and Golden Gate Park. With each ride, I gained more confidence. Soon I was biking over the Golden Gate Bridge and up Mount Tam. I remember standing on the summit, looking out at the bay, taking a deep breath and suddenly realizing how far I had come.

Exercise became a way of life and a way to pay for school. When I went to 24 Hour Fitness and took my first spinning class, I got hooked. After intensive training, I became a certified instructor. I was nervous about teaching my first class, but prayer helped.

Today, I still go to meetings. I don't drink or use drugs. And I've been able to abstain from addictive eating for six years. Food is still a drug for me, but I no longer obsess about it. I welcome each new day, and I am no longer miserable. I learned to like myself.

Changing my life was not easy. One saying that helped was, "Don't quit before your miracle happens."

At 42, I've never felt better. I plan to move across the bay this summer and ride my bike to classes at UC Berkeley in the fall.

I've been able to abstain from addictive eating for six years. Food is still a drug for me, but I no longer obsess about it. I welcome each new day, and I am no longer miserable.



Karen eats a balanced meal of pre-measured wholesome food three times a day. She eats no sugar or flour.

Visit [www.foodaddicts.org](http://www.foodaddicts.org) for help with food addiction.  
E-mail Karen M. Kinney at [karenkinney123@yahoo.com](mailto:karenkinney123@yahoo.com).

# Murder of an Imam's Son

Ali Shahin thought he was driving to Monster Park to meet a friend

by Stephanie Rice



Left: Ali Shahin, who spent his teenage years on Treasure Island, immigrated to San Francisco from Cairo at age 9.

Layout photo: Ali was gunned down at the corner of Giants Drive and Ingerson Avenue near Monster Park on the night of Sept. 4.



of concern for their safety.

While police brought out ambulances, Ali and his brother were taken to the hospital. Ali's brother was taken to the hospital.

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**T**hat's the scenario Ali's close friend, Justin, has pieced together. Although police have confirmed finding Ali that September evening, dead on the ground outside his car, they are withholding detailed information while they continue to investigate. But Justin says he knows what happened to his friend.

"They killed him for no reason," he says of the people Ali went to meet that night. "They didn't even take a dollar from his wallet. They just killed him."

Ali's father is Imam Sayed Shahin, leader of Masjid Darussalam, one of San Francisco's largest mosques.

Keeping his own emotions in check, he speaks only of the effect Ali's murder has had on the community at the mosque. He says worshippers are shocked, and parents are afraid for their children's safety.

"There's a lot of fear," he says, speaking Arabic as Jay, a family friend who asks that only his first name be used, interprets. "Everyone is worried about their kids and thinking about moving their kids somewhere else to survive."

"They didn't have this kind of violence back home," adds the imam. "I know there are wars going on in the Middle East but not this kind of personal violence. ... You only hear about violence on the news. When it's close by, it's different."

After translating Imam Shahin's words, Jay nods in agreement. "It's affected a lot of people," he says. "I'm one of them, too. It's not easy to have someone killed like that and not have terror in the back of your head, worrying about it."

Born into a Muslim Egyptian family, Ali immigrated to San Francisco with his family at age 9. Justin, who also comes from a Muslim family, was one of Ali's first friends in the city. They grew up together, playing soccer for a local mosque and hanging out at the beach.

But Justin, 17, says there was a lot even he didn't know about Ali. "Everything was secret in his life," Justin says.

**"There's a lot of fear. Everyone is worried about their kids and thinking about moving their kids somewhere else to survive." – IMAM SAYED SHAHIN**

"He didn't want anyone to know anything about him."

As teenagers, the two lived on Treasure Island. Justin says Ali fell in with a tough crowd and began keeping secrets for his new friends. Secrets about drugs and guns, where they came from and who was buying and who was selling. Secrets maybe the teenager was beginning to regret.

"I should get out of it," Ali told Justin the day before

he was killed. "Now I'm at City College. ... I shouldn't be with them."

As Ali struggled to choose between two lives, Justin says the imam's son continued to successfully keep his activities hidden from his father. "His dad loved him so much," Justin says. "He didn't know."

On Tuesday, Sept. 4, Ali went to his classes at City College. From 11 to 12:30 p.m. he had English 9 in the Health Center. From 5:30 to 7 p.m. he went to Applied Geometry in Batmale Hall.



Imam Shahin reads the Quran as sunlight streams into the vast prayer room.

After school he drove to work at the pizza restaurant. During his shift, around 8:30 p.m., his cell phone rang. It was a friend from Treasure Island.

"This guy called Ali and said, 'Can you come pick me up?' " Justin says. "And Ali said, 'OK, I will.' "

Ali's friend was at Monster Park, the ballpark in Hunters Point, and said he needed a ride. After agreeing to return by midnight to finish his shift, Ali headed out the door, still on the phone with his friend.

"Don't worry about me," he told his boss as he left.

Less than an hour later, Ali pulled off Highway 101, driving through the quiet toward Monster Park. When he

reached Giants Drive and Ingerson Avenue at the base of the ballpark, Ali slowed down.

On nights when there is no game, the dimly lit stadium glows softly, but no light escapes into the surrounding streets, leaving the intersection dark. A chain-link fence blocks off Giants Drive, the road leading into the stadium. There's no easy way to leave the intersection.

Based on conversations with friends and police, Justin

believes at least three of Ali's Treasure Island friends were there waiting. Maybe one was the friend who had called to ask for a ride. Maybe one got in the passenger seat. Then there were gunshots. Then Ali was bleeding and his friends were running away. It was 9:25 p.m.

the imam says. "That was his goal — to have his family really happy."

Ali's mother and older brother are staying with relatives in another state. According to Justin, Ali's mother is in poor health, and no one has told her that her son is dead.

Inside the third-floor prayer room, the muffled chaos of the streets below blends with quiet conversations in Arabic after midday prayer.

Witnesses would later tell police that just after hearing the gunshots, they saw three men who appeared to be Samoan, about 18 to 20 years old, fleeing toward the nearby Alice Griffith Housing Project.

**O**n a weekday afternoon, several weeks after his son's death, the imam sits near the east wall of Masjid Darussalam's vast prayer room. The mosque is on the northeast corner of Jones and Market streets, in the heart of San Francisco's high-crime Tenderloin neighborhood.

Inside the third-floor prayer room, the muffled chaos of the streets below blends with quiet conversations in Arabic as worshippers disperse after midday prayer. Sunlight streams through the windows, creating a patchwork of light and shade against the crimson carpet.

Imam Shahin has just finished leading the prayer and remains at the front of the room, sitting cross-legged on the floor. After some convincing from an adviser at the local Islamic society, which has offices in the mosque, he agrees

"We told her (Ali was) in an accident and is in the hospital," Justin says. "She loved him very much. ... It's really hard to tell her."

Last summer, weeks before Ali was gunned down, Justin says the killers gave Ali a warning. The window of the Treasure Island apartment Ali shared with his family was broken. The intruders ransacked Ali's room and stole the TV and several other items. "They took everything in the house," Justin says.

The burglars also left something behind — several bullets placed just inside the door of Ali's room. Justin says it was a message, that they were warning their friend just how high the price could be if he did something they didn't like.

Ali was sure the thieves were his own friends and told his father he knew who was responsible, Justin says. Concerned for his son's safety, Imam Shahin sent Ali to stay with relatives in another state.

Later in the summer, Ali traveled to Saudi Arabia with his older brother to complete the Umrah, an optional



Imam Shahin kneels in prayer at Masjid Darussalam in the Tenderloin several weeks after Ali was gunned down in Hunters Point

to answer a reporter's questions about his younger son.

The imam shows no emotion as he talks about Ali. His face is blank as he speaks softly in Arabic, but his eyes are red. Jay, the family friend, sits on the carpet next to him, translating his words into English.

"He was very friendly," Imam Shahin says. "He joked around a lot. He never had any hatred for anyone. A lot of people liked him."

Imam Shahin says Ali was excited about his first semester of college and was contemplating a career in social work. He was close to his mother and older brother, and wanted to make enough money to support them one day.

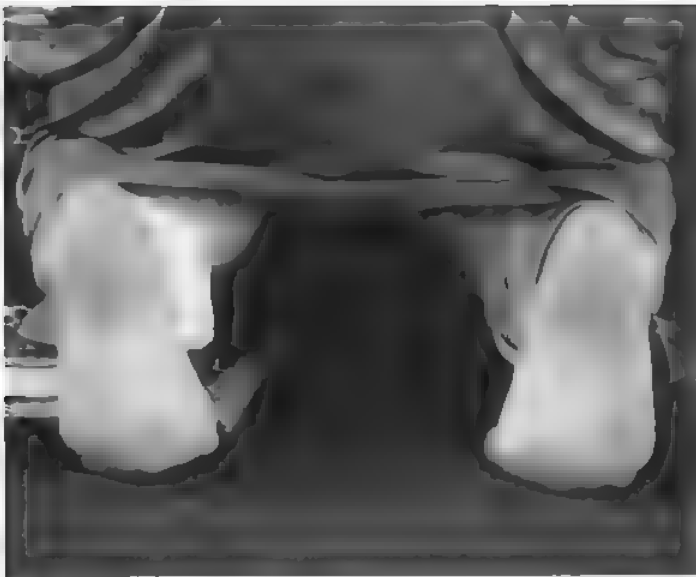
"He always wanted to have a better life for his family,"

religious pilgrimage that's similar to the Hajj. They prayed at the Sacred Mosque in Mecca and the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina — the two holiest places on Earth, according to Islam.

Imam Shahin was proud of his son for making the journey and said the pilgrimage changed Ali, making the teenager want more for his future.

After Saudi Arabia, the brothers traveled to Egypt. This was the first time Ali had seen his family there since moving nine years earlier.

Ali's friends thought he might stay in Egypt indefinitely, but soon he was back in San Francisco. Joe, another childhood friend of Ali, says when Ali returned, he was more



During the week, Imam Shahin leads the midday prayer on the third floor of the Tenderloin mosque.

focused and eager to reshape his life.

"I think when he came back from Saudi Arabia, he wanted to stay away from all that stuff — all the gangs and violence," Joe says. "He wasn't on the right path and he wanted to change that. It was too late, you could say."

"I think when he came back from Saudi Arabia, he wanted to stay away from all that stuff — all the gangs and violence. He wasn't on the right path and he wanted to change that. It was too late, you could say." — JOE, ALI'S FRIEND

Fernando, a City College student and good friend of Ali, agrees that Ali arrived back in San Francisco determined to pursue a different future.

"He came back like a new man," Fernando says. "He wanted to stop all the bullshit."

Shortly after Ali returned from the Middle East, he went to visit his high school principal, Teri Delane. Delane was disappointed Ali had not remained in Cairo, safe with family.

"He wasn't different," Delane says. "He needed to stay out of the city."

Delane runs the Life Learning Academy on Treasure Island, a charter high school for troubled youth. Ali finished his senior year of high school at the academy after transferring from Wallenberg Traditional High School in the Western Addition.

Delane says Ali, whose parents speak no English, had come to the Life Learning Academy by himself and asked to enroll. Then he convinced two of his friends to come to the academy as well.

"He had a good heart," Delane says. "He was a very intelligent, very bright kid, and he really pushed himself to change."

But, she adds, Ali was also "a kid who had some problems," and during the last months of his life, Delane says, Ali "went astray."

Justin says he knows Ali made some bad choices.

"His friends were a mistake," Justin says. "They're really bad."

But, the 17-year-old explains, even a lifestyle filled with violence and friends who will kill other friends to protect secrets has its appeal — money, for one thing.

Justin says the allure of the large amounts of cash that come from selling drugs or guns can be hard to resist.

"His dad wasn't getting paid that much," Justin says. "And if I'm not working, I need to wear what my friend wears and get an iPod and a cell phone and show off for the girls."

"I see a lot of my friends selling drugs in the street because they need money," he adds. "This is America — you can do whatever you want."

Justin doesn't live on Treasure Island anymore. He says he's stopped wearing the clothes that could be interpreted as gang attire, and his parents have imposed stricter rules since his friend's death.



Imam Shahin moved with his family from Cairo to San Francisco nine years ago.

After Ali was killed, "my mom didn't let me go out after school," he says.

Despite the new neighborhood and a stricter curfew, Justin says Ali's death has shaken his family, and his older brother worries about him. "My brother tells me that I'm acting the same way that Ali was," he says.

"Well, a little bit," Justin admits. "I'm human."

*No one has been arrested for Ali's murder. But, as of December, police have at least one suspect, according to San Francisco police spokesman Dewayne Tully.*

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# Advocating for the homeless

by T.J. Johnston



**An uphill battle: Bob Offer-Westort fights to give poverty a voice**

Late in the afternoon on Turk Street, between Hyde and Larkin streets in the heart of the Tenderloin, two men are pushing their worldly belongings in shopping carts along the sidewalk.

They've just passed the Coalition on Homelessness, located in a nondescript yellow concrete building in the middle of the block. Soup kitchens, clinics and shelters are scattered throughout the neighborhood.



PHOTO BY ERIN REAGAN / ETC

Bob Offer-Westort reads poetry in Cow Hollow last October.

Inside the coalition's office, desks are cluttered with phones, computers and paperwork. Propaganda-style posters are plastered across the walls. One reads: "Homelessness is not just for poor people anymore." On another, a young boy salutes against the backdrop of an American flag. "Twenty percent of the homeless people in the U.S. are Vietnam veterans," the poster says.

Bob Offer-Westort, 26, is the youngest employee. As development coordinator, he's in charge of seeking donations from corporations, foundations and everyday people.

"Homelessness is not a friendly issue to raise funds for," Bob says. "It's a political issue to begin with. Homeless people don't get good press, which makes it especially hard."

The money Bob brings in goes toward monitoring shelter conditions, providing job skills training, assisting homeless people with legal problems, and publishing Street Sheet, a monthly newspaper produced by staff and homeless contributors.

But money alone will not solve the problem. And Bob knows it. Society's attitude toward homeless people needs to change, he says.

Bob received his bachelor's in social anthropology from Global College at Long Island University, which emphasizes social activism. He speaks

Thai and has studied Cantonese at Ciry College. He shares a place with Thai roommates in the Sunset. In his spare time, he reads poetry and studies languages.

As former editor of Street Sheet, Bob is familiar with the issues facing the city's homeless population — something he says is often ignored.

"There aren't too many print venues in which homeless people's voices can be heard," Bob says. "Street Sheet creates an opportunity for the homeless and middle-class to interact directly." Many of the articles are written by homeless people themselves. They sell the newspaper on the street for a dollar and get to keep the money.

The paper was created to balance the way the mainstream media portrays homelessness.

Bob says press coverage has gotten worse lately. In a recent story headlined "Enough is enough" in the San Francisco Chronicle, the author wrote, "indications are that residents have had it with aggressive panhandlers, street squatters and drug users."

It's just one example of how the homeless are treated unfairly, Bob says. "When do you run an opinion column on Page One?"

To help bridge the gap between homeless people and the general public, the coalition recently held a benefit at the SomArts Gallery.

"I have this hope that art can be used to change the culture," Bob says. "We need to engage with the 98 percent of the population that's not homeless."

During the event, Bob greeted people at the door and retrieved paintings as they were being auctioned. The coalition raised \$20,000. Some of the pieces were original works by homeless artists.

On each Oct. 7 for the last three years, Bob has celebrated the anniversary of Allen Ginsberg's "Howl." At the intersection of Fillmore and Filbert streets in Cow Hollow, he stands on the sidewalk and reads the whole thing out loud. Ginsberg first read the poem 52 years ago at the same location. Bob says the poem's message — about people who are shunned by society — resonates as much today as it did a half century ago.

Wearing jeans and a plaid shirt purchased from a thrift store, Bob begins reading as people walk by: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness . . ."

Most ignore Bob and his poem. But, for a moment, one man stops and listens.

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PHOTOS BY ERIN REAGAN / ETC

Life on the creek: Nestled in a secluded corner of San Francisco, the Mission Creek houseboats are home to 50 residents.

## An urban oasis: Houseboaters stake their claim to Mission Creek



Mission Creek, one of San Francisco's few remaining natural waterways, flows through a forgotten part of the city. Commuters along Third Street and I-280 pass it every day but take little notice.

Hidden by the freeway, UCSF's new campus and a wall of identical cream-colored condos, the creek is an oasis in the middle of intense redevelopment. It's a restored habitat for many species of coastal wildlife, including egrets, herons, pelicans, plovers, seals, stingrays and crab.

The Spanish arrived in 1776. They built Mission Dolores on the banks of Laguna Dolores, an inlet that fed into Mission Creek. Back then, the creek's waters flowed all the way from Twin Peaks. What is left of the creek today is actually Mission Bay, an extinct body of water.

Before it was partially filled with sand, paved over and developed a century and a half ago, the creek wound all the way up to Harrison and 16th streets. The waterway, which empties into the bay, was once a transportation lifeline of the city's lumber, hay, and maritime industries, connecting barges to Central Pacific rail cars.

Today, 20 houseboats, some of which have been there

for more than two decades, line the south side of Mission Creek between Fifth and Sixth streets.

In September, the Mission Creek Harbor Association signed a new lease with the San Francisco Port Commission, which permits 20 live-aboard vessels to occupy the existing berths in the area until at least 2055.

The 50 houseboat residents who call Mission Creek home are an eccentric group of individuals who have a profound appreciation for the water — doctors, lawyers, artists, teachers, truck drivers, carpenters, fishermen, circus performers, teenagers and children.

Among them are retired truck driver and harbormaster Kevin O'Connell, City College instructor Tony Lang, artist Ginny Stearns and composer Jack Wickert.

Kevin O'Connell lives in a boat called "The Cartoon," which he built 25 years ago to look like a caricature of his face — two windows for his glasses and a slanted wall for his arched nose. Someday he plans to plant an asparagus fern at the bottom of the wall for his bushy moustache. He offers an unfiltered cigarette, which even for a nonsmoker seems ungracious not to accept. There's something ceremonial about kicking back in a houseboat on the creek, smoking with the harbormaster.

Kevin pulls out a large, black-and-white aerial photograph and smooths it open on the boat's floor. He traces the ghost of the old creek with his cigarette, all the way up to the mission at 16th and Dolores streets. He turns the pages of a hardbound copy of "Vanished Waters" to

photographs of the 1890s depicting rough-looking men building huge, lumber-carrying steam schooners.

"We put together this book 20 years ago," Kevin says. "We decided to do a little history lesson."

In the book, author Nancy Olmstead points out that 200 years before the first house-boaters settled on Mission Creek, the Ohlone Indians were still paddling the waterway in canoes made of tule reeds. They navigated San Francisco's creeks and streams for at least two millennia, fishing, collecting mussels and clams, planting reeds, and establishing seasonal encampments. When the Spanish arrived in the mid-1700s, they tried to convert the Ohlones to Christianity. They enslaved many of them and ultimately drove the native population near extinction.

By the 1880s, Kevin says, two huge lumberyards supplied wood, mostly from Mendocino's redwood forests, for the city's houses. Boatyards and cabinet shops lined the north side of the channel, where the condos now tower. At the mouth of the creek, mounds of hay imported from the Sacramento Valley fed San Francisco livestock. During the Great Depression, longshoremen looked for jobs at United Fruit Company on Mission Creek.

Kevin discovered Mission Creek in 1964, after serving as cook in the Army during the Vietnam War. Five years later, the 27-year-old vet moved into a houseboat he built on the creek. It was a loose community of whiskey-drinking merchant fishermen, World War II vets, boat builders and sailors. The ex-Catholic Beat poet was one of the few people in the community who'd been to college — a bit too highbrow for some of the old-timers.

"Do you know this place used to be called Shit Creek?" Kevin asks. "It was really vile here. The water was filthy, electricity was spotty, we used generators and we threw together our own docks." The area has since been cleaned up, but sewage and runoff after rains are still a problem.

Kevin fondly remembers the old creek as a civilized, laissez-faire community with an Old West feel. During the '70s, artists arrived, drawn to the sunlight on the water, the closeness to nature and the funky backwater community.

When the '89 quake hit, Kevin was working on his boat and felt the first tremors. He thought someone was speed-

ing down the channel in a powerboat. He walked out onto his deck and watched the pylons swaying like a samba line.

"A sudden surge of pressure lifted the whole boat up and dropped it down," he recalls. "The wing of the freeway was snapping back and forth. The expansion joints were opening all the way up like teeth. Chips of concrete were shooting across the channel."

Kevin says that Mission Creek is the safest place to be during an earthquake. "We're a lot more self-sufficient than regular beach people."

In 1980, Tony Lang wanted to move out of his converted firehouse in Oakland and into a cheap place in the Mission. He stumbled on Mission Creek, where he saw a "For Sale" sign on a World War II landing craft sitting on a sinking dock. "Well, that would be interesting," he thought. He was able to pay off the boat in two years.

A couple of years after moving to the creek, Tony got married on his leaky, rotten boat to a woman he met in a City College Cantonese class.

"I told my wife when we got married that once you live on a boat you can never get used to living on land. She didn't think that was funny," Tony laughs.

"There was always that sense of danger — trying to keep it from sinking. The automatic pump was going off every hour, in the middle of the night. There were big holes you could put your finger through."

Only a few months before the birth of their daughter, who attends UC Berkeley and still lives on Mission Creek, Tony and a couple of neighbors built a new boat. The modest two-story floating home sits toward the end of the dock near the freeway, which Tony calls "tenement row."

About 10 years ago, after a 30-year career with the phone company, Tony realized he needed a job with better retirement benefits. That's when he began taking classes at City College. He went on to get his master's in English composition at San Francisco State, where he also teaches. He's been teaching English at City College for three years.

Tony believes living on the water gives people a sense of spirituality. He studies American Indian shamanism and occasionally takes up a ceremonial tobacco pipe. He



Tony Lang remembers when the creek was a country marina.



Kevin O'Connell lives in a houseboat called "The Cartoon."

describes himself as a spiritual — not a dogmatic — Catholic.

He remembers when the creek was a country marina. In those days, his co-workers from the phone company would yell to him from the old freeway as they drove to work: "Hey Tony, get up! It's time to go to work!"

When Ginny Stearns, another creek resident, adopted a baby girl from China 15 years ago, she wasn't sure if raising Mei Li on an old houseboat was a good idea, but her husband, Bob Isaacson, convinced her. A 10-year Mission Creek resident at the time, Isaacson was not about to give up his home and community to live on "the beach," as he calls dry land. And then their boat sank.

"When you're in a boat on the water, you're in a little eggshell."

— GINNY STEARNS



Ginny Stearns, a 15-year resident.

Ginny was instrumental in creating the park. She reintroduced eight species of butterflies to the area and posted a sign with illustrated descriptions of each.

"I'm a self-appointed documenter of the wildlife here," she says. "I have an extensive list of birds that I see."

As part of their extended lease, the Mission Creek Houseboat Association will help develop and maintain an extended stretch of parks along Mission Creek. Ginny's driftwood bird perches, which can be seen from her balcony overlooking the creek, will soon be installed along the waterway as part of that project.

She laughs as she remembers building a Huck Finn raft

groaning," Ginny recalls. "I ran downstairs and saw that water was pouring through the back door. I ran around and tried to stop things, but it was clearly hopeless."

"This wasn't supposed to happen," she adds. "I was living with an engineer."

The water rose to the second floor. Stearns found out later that a few houseboats had sunk on Mission Creek.

"It became clear that when you're in a boat on the water, you're in a little eggshell," she says.

Ginny and Bob rebuilt their boat. Huffacker Park, a two-acre strip of land fronting the creek, features a meandering dirt path and a community garden.

for Mei Li and watching her paddle down the creek. Such a country scene would not have been possible years ago, when the paint factory dumped chemicals into the creek, and untreated sewage flowed into its brackish waters.

"I'm glad I missed that," Ginny says.



Musician Jack Wickert has lived on the creek for 12 years.

Seventy-year-old Jack Wickert is one of the creek's most colorful storytellers.

He plays the trumpet — and the piano, tuba, euphonium, guitar, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, obo, violin, viola, cello and upright bass. He can even squeeze some mean notes out of a garden hose.

Since the '70s, Jack has played with the San Francisco Mime Troupe, El Teatro Campesino and the Pickle Family Circus, some of whose original members still live on Mission Creek.

The steep, pointed roof of his houseboat is reminiscent of a medieval parish church. Inside, light refracts through a stained glass window that a friend salvaged from a demolished church. His walls are decked with framed photographs of circus troupes and garish drawings of Adelitas — brave female warriors of the Mexican Revolution — standing tall and full figured, holding machetes and waving Mexican flags.

Jack walks through his front door and onto the dock to watch three boys and their father test their balance as they step onto a river raft carrying a cooler and lawn chairs. The three will paddle toward McCovey Cove, south of the stadium, for one of Barry Bonds' last Giants games.

After his family moved to the city from Wisconsin in 1940, Jack played in a San Francisco that offered much more open space. He was drawn to the water, often collecting scraps of meat in Butchertown to use as bait for fishing in Islais Creek, south of where he now lives.

With a cigarette between his lips, Jack stops mid-sentence and turns his attention to a squawking seagull that lands on the railing of his houseboat.

"Shut up you son of a bitch!" he yells.

But there's a more grating sound that drowns out the cacophony of birds along the creek: the endless rhythm of



huge machines pounding, grinding and drilling throughout Mission Bay. Jack imitates the sound of the pile drivers.

"Bam, bam, bam, bam!" he shouts and pounds his fists into the table.

It's a reminder that Mission Creek is a city creek, washing through an encroaching urban landscape. In addition to UCSF's sprawling campus, in a few years the area will experience even more changes — more office and retail buildings, a large hotel, a library and a new public school.

Over the past three hundred years, Mission Creek

has been home to the Ohlone Indians, Spanish explorers, 49ers, railroad workers and the maritime industry. It is one of the city's few remaining creeks that aren't paved over.

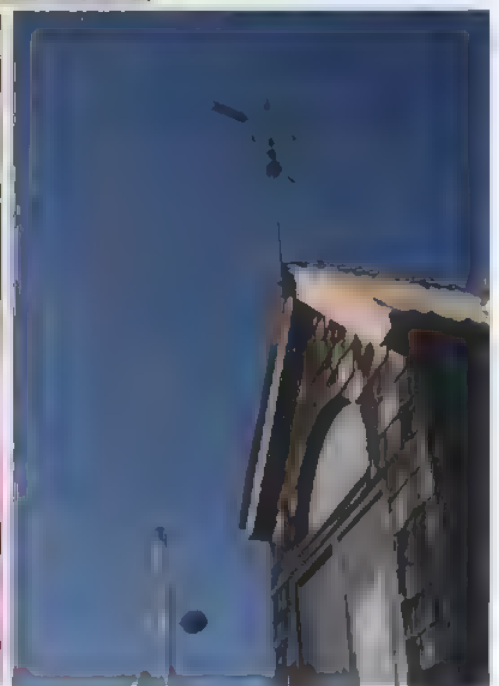
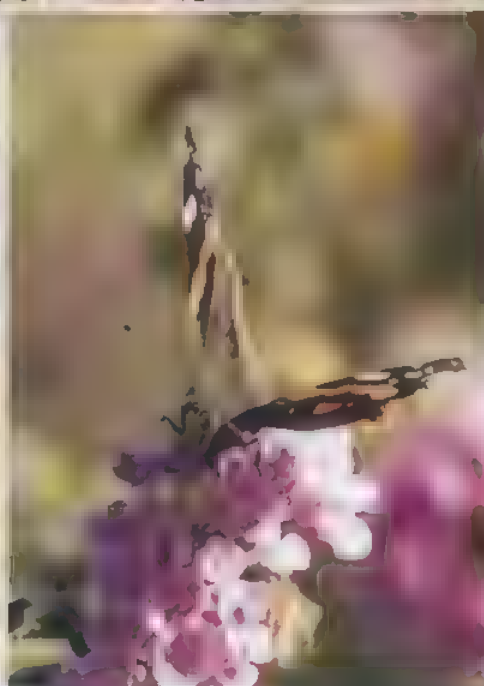
While defending their right to stay, this eclectic group of houseboaters has also preserved a natural waterway that runs through an expanding concrete jungle. And they are a link to the area's important cultural past.

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Left: A boat rests against the dock of a Mission Creek houseboat, reflecting on the water's glassy surface.

Below, left to right: Nearby Huffaker Park provides a refuge for city wildlife; Wickert designed the roof of his houseboat to resemble a medieval church.





# HOMELESS

Homeless for the Weekend

by Alex Dixon

Finding his way:  
Writer Alex Dixon traces  
an alley in the Tenderloin  
near Larkin Street

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL P. SMITH / ETC.



**Back Alley Smoke:**  
Dixon lights a cigarette  
in an empty alley. He  
brought five packs of  
Camel Filters.

## It's 7 a.m. on Saturday and I'm sitting in the back

of St. Boniface Catholic Church trying to sleep. I've been up all night and I'm exhausted. A middle-aged guy wearing a stocking cap and a dark hooded parka is snoring in the pew in front of me. He's blowing my cover. The priest stops his sermon and announces over the loudspeaker: "This is just a reminder. There is no sleeping in the church. If you are asleep, please leave."

People turn around and stare. A church usher walks over and shakes him. "Hey buddy," he says, "you can't sleep here."

The man doesn't argue. He swaggers out of the church, shaking his head. I follow him. Once outside we go our separate ways. He's a real street person. I'm an imposter.

According to the city's recent homeless count, about 3,000 people live on the streets. For 48 hours, I lived among them.

Growing up in Granite Bay — a suburban enclave 20 miles east of Sacramento that's one of the highest priced ZIP codes in California — didn't exactly prepare me for life on the street. I was raised in a gated neighborhood that had a security guard. I lived in a house with 10 rooms, seven bathrooms, palm trees, a pool, a four-car garage and wrought iron fencing around the perimeter.

Out of pure curiosity, I decided to leave the comfort of my one-bedroom apartment in Parkmerced and spend a weekend without a roof over my head. I made an itinerary of places to eat, sleep and hang out.

I paid meticulous attention to how I looked. I wore jeans with holes in the seat, scuffed casual black shoes with frayed stitching and a stained white parka.

In my backpack, I had a cell phone, a cotton blanket, Hunter Thompson's "The Great Shark Hunt," an extra rain jacket, a "Free Eats" chart, five packs of Camel Filters, six pencils, a notebook and my house keys.

The first people I met were a group of about 10 street kids sitting on the corner of Haight Street and Central Avenue. I pointed to the ground next to them and asked, "Is this seat taken?"

A girl with blonde hair that fell below her knees laughed and said, "Go ahead."

The hard pavement wasn't familiar to them, either. They were here for the 40th Anniversary of the Summer of Love Festival. Their car ran out of gas, and so far they'd been stuck for a week.

Dano, a bulky 20-year-old whose blackened toes poked through his shoes, grew up in a foster home, didn't like it, and ran away at age 10. His dad had been homeless and his mom couldn't support him. So he hitchhiked around the country until last year, when he started a commune in Arcata.

Dano was an expert at asking people for money. In less than five minutes of panhandling, he had \$15.

"You can make \$400 a day in San Diego," Dano said.

A squad car pulled up. "I'm gonna have to ask you guys to move," the officer in the passenger seat said, dangling his right arm out the window. "Why don't you guys go down to the park?"

The kids reluctantly gathered their sleeping bags, backpacks, books and bongs, and started down Haight Street toward the park. In the week they'd been here, this was the second time the police had told them to move.



We walked together to Hippie Hill in Golden Gate Park, where they met some friends. I left after 20 minutes, worried that I'd miss dinner if I didn't.

I went to a soup kitchen called the Coffee House on Page and Steiner streets. I was two hours early. Three people were there. Dinner at 8 p.m. consisted of hot dogs, mashed potatoes, watermelon, vanilla cupcakes and coffee. I watched *Blades of Glory* on a big screen TV with an old man from Alabama in a Braves hat; an effeminate young

I had been to the Tenderloin before, but not like this. For once, people didn't ask me for anything. They offered instead: "pain pills," "OC," "chiva," or "brown," referring to OxyContin and heroin.

Sitting on the ground outside a soup kitchen at Sixth and Mission streets for dinner that night, I met a woman named Susan. Her brilliant blue eyes seemed to belong to the person she once was. She kept asking for cigarettes.



Alex (center) stands in line around the corner from St. Anthony's Dining Hall in San Francisco's Tenderloin for a free hot lunch.

guy in shorts, who flirted with a guy about his own age; and a 12-year-old girl, whom everyone seemed to know.

Around midnight, I walked to Buena Vista Park and tried to sleep behind some bushes near the street. I knew I could get a \$76 ticket, but I was more worried about being woken up by a kick to the face than a police officer's flashlight.

Besides the cold, the sound of shopping carts rolling along the pavement and the rattling of bottles and cans kept me up most of the night.

When I awoke it was 5 a.m. I stumbled down the hill to the bus stop. With a free bus pass I got from a youth shelter, I went to St. Boniface Church in the Tenderloin. It was closed, so I stood on the corner of Leavenworth Street and Golden Gate Avenue and waited.

"Anyone gotta point?" asked a man looking for a hypodermic needle as he walked by, eyes rolling back in his head.

Two people in soiled sleeping bags lay next to a building, orange syringe caps and tie-offs strewn on the sidewalk beside them.

Half a dozen men dressed in blue from head to toe stood across the street like they owned the place. Two skinny men did a deal in the crosswalk. A guy wearing a black puffy jacket, a sideways cap, and pants down to his knees peed into a trashcan. On Leavenworth Street, 30 people stood in line for a homeless shelter.

"Susan, how many cigarettes you smoke in five minutes?" a man asked.

She didn't answer. I counted seven, not including two butts she picked up off the street and lit. She asked everyone for cigarettes. People gave her one, sometimes two. If she got a quarter, she bought a cigarette with it.

I asked a man who worked there if I could use the bathroom. He said sure, in a second.

In a half hour, I asked again.

"It's too late now," he said. "They're setting up."

"Is there another bathroom?"

He shook his head. "Not around here. Just find an alley or go behind a car or somethin'. That is, if you're accustomed to doin' a thing like that."

A woman wearing a hat and sunglasses appeared out of nowhere and stood above us.

"Would anyone like a sack lunch?" she asked.

We took a brown paper bag filled with two peanut butter sandwiches, a Capri Sun, cheese crackers, applesauce and a card that told us how to pray.

"God bless you both," the woman said.

After three hours in line, we finally got into the soup kitchen. I sat by a Vietnam vet from Tennessee, a heroin junkie who had a 30-year coin from Alcoholics Anonymous and a man with an 8th-grade education who had been to jail twice for forging cashier's checks.

A Filipino church group played guitars and sang songs and a preacher gave a long sermon in broken English.



Growing up in an exclusive suburban neighborhood didn't prepare me for life on the street. At night, there is no escaping the cold and the ground is hard.

Some people fell asleep. Some sang. Susan knew all the words. An hour later we were finally fed beef stir-fry over rice, corn, fried chicken and homemade cookies.

Around 8 that night, I searched for a place to pee after dinner. I refused to go on the street. The only public restroom I found was out of order at Civic Center.

I went into every fast food place and coffee shop on Market Street, and all the bathrooms either cost money or were "out of order." I walked by City Hall and considered peeing on the steps.

At Peet's Coffee on Van Ness Avenue, I was allowed to use their restroom free of charge. They were closing up and preparing to throw out the coffee. I asked for a cup, but they refused. It's a policy thing.

At 9 p.m., I walked to a youth shelter at Ellis Street and Van Ness Avenue. I had been calling shelters all day and this was my last hope. I was more interested in sleeping than in talking to people. I felt dejected when I found out it was full. I wanted to go home.

With nothing to do I walked to In-N-Out Burger at Fisherman's Wharf. I heard they give free food to people without money. I asked a disheveled man with an overgrown beard who was walking out of the restaurant if they gave him food.

"I was just in there warming up," he said. "Here. This is all I got." He gave me two cents before I could say no and wandered off.

I decided I'd try anyway. I had long since lost my dignity.

"Listen," I said to the cashier. "I have no money, but I was wondering if I could get some food."

The cashier asked the manager, who said, "We can't do that." I got a water and nursed it at a table for an hour, trying to avoid the inevitable cold.

A block from the bay at 1 a.m., at the intersection of Van Ness Avenue and North Point Street, I was so cold it hurt. I paced aggressively as I waited to use my last bus pass to go back to Buena Vista Park.

Across the street, I saw an open fence and a field. I ran. Galileo High School's football field looked safe and sheltered from the wind. In a corner, out of sight, I put down four newspapers for a mattress and lay down. It was the most comfortable I'd felt all day.

I awoke at 3 a.m. colder than ever. I couldn't go back to sleep so I gathered my stuff and took the bus inland, where I hoped it would be warmer. It wasn't. I got off at Market Street and walked Haight Street to Buena Vista

Park, to the same spot I'd been the night before, and tried to go back to sleep.

After a few hours of restless sleep, I awoke at daylight and walked aimlessly around the Haight, killing time like I had been the whole weekend. Soon, my time was up.

Around 2 in the afternoon, I got home, feeling like I hadn't slept in 48 hours. But I was wide awake. I couldn't stop thinking. Who would want that life? It's cold. The ground is hard. There's nothing to do. You feel divorced from everything. You're on the lowest rung of the social ladder. No one cares. And you can't escape that reality by sleeping.

Really, I'd only had a taste.

"What you did doesn't amount to much to me," said Tiny, founder of *Poor Magazine* and author of "Criminal of Poverty: Growing Up Homeless in America." She was living on the streets as early as age 11.

"It doesn't give you a true sense of homelessness, or



Alex found smoking to be one of the few comforts left while living on the street.

a true sense of unending poverty. Basic things, like being cold all the fucking time, you know? Being worried — all the time — about your basic survival. And just the terror: Even if you become housed temporarily, without a safety net there's that terror of becoming de-housed again."

She's right. I knew it was fake before I did it. I'd thought about it. But what I didn't think about was food, warmth, or a place to sleep. And only after I begged for them did I realize: These are the most valuable things.

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Fashion department chair Diane Green relaxes backstage, while taking a break from Macy's Fall 2007 Passport Fashion Show.

## Fashioning a brand new generation of designers

Backstage at Macy's Fall 2007 Passport Fashion Show in Fort Mason's Festival Pavilion, models are stripped down to their undergarments. A tall blonde, who could be mistaken for Nicole Kidman, stands like a mannequin waiting to be dressed.

A City College wardrobe stylist wrestles with the zipper on her sleek, silver satin minidress while another student helps her into a pair of matching stilettos.

Next, a makeup artist applies silver eye shadow, mascara and deep red lipstick. Behind her, a male stylist curls and sets her hair and finishes it with a flourish of hairspray.

Head to toe, she's ready. Confidently, she strides toward the 120-foot runway that divides a roomful of 1,600 cheering guests. She's greeted by a constellation of camera flashes and spotlights.

For the next hour, the same scene is repeated nearly 100 times as models change into fall 2007 creations by Calvin Klein, Marc Ecko, Via Spiga and Tracy Reese.

Backstage, Diane Green, chair of City College's fashion department, is making sure everything runs smoothly. She's trained about 50 of her students as wardrobe stylists. Over the next three days, they'll make close to \$200 for

playing dress-up with America's latest trends. And it's all for a good cause. The Passport Show has raised more than \$25 million for local HIV/AIDS organizations.

The show's silver theme celebrates 25 years of San Francisco's most popular fashion event. Coincidentally, City College's fashion merchandising program, once part of the business department, was started 25 years ago, too. Back then, City College wasn't a very fashionable place. Diane Green changed all that.

With a master's in education and extensive background in the fashion industry, Green moved to San Francisco in 1979 and began teaching fashion courses part time at the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising. Around the same time, she accepted a full-time position at City College and taught the first fashion and merchandising courses through the business department.

"At the time, there were no fashion courses taught at City College — only marketing courses," Green says. She wanted to develop an innovative fashion program — one that provided hands-on experiences and opportunities other community colleges did not offer.

Green started the fashion and merchandising program, which later merged with the consumer arts and science department to form the fashion department. She began with 12 fashion and merchandising courses and then added 10 design courses.

One of her biggest challenges was convincing the administration that there was enough interest to fill the classrooms. Today, more than 300 students are enrolled.

"Diane is a very supportive and encouraging instructor," says Rene Walker, one of Green's recent students. "She's interesting, informative and fun. I gained so much from her classes because she brings professionalism and offers real-world experiences."

Durand Guion, once a student of Green's, teaches fashion merchandising and forecasting at City College. "She's done a great job mentoring former students, like myself," he says. Without her guidance, Guion says he might not have become an instructor.

Recent graduate Graciela Ronconi used the practical skills she learned from Green to start a clothing boutique

**"Sometimes you have to find something rewarding. It's not always about the money." — DIANE GREEN**

in Noe Valley. "Diane is loved and admired by many of her students, not only for her fabulous wardrobe, but for her very personable way of teaching," Ronconi says.

Green's determination and sense of style developed at a very young age. "Living in New York, I was surrounded by fashion. ... It's all over the place," she says.

She remembers a shopping trip to a department store with her grandmother when she was a child, living in Brooklyn. "I saw a spring coat that I loved and carried it around the store the whole time I shopped with her," she says. "I knew what I wanted in style, even at six years old." She got the coat.

Her grandparents, who were garment makers for Bill Blass and other top designers in New York, introduced her to the world of fashion. As a teen, she worked as a fit model for department store showrooms on Fifth Avenue. She also modeled for a number of fashion designers, including Blass.

"I appreciate good design and the creativity of certain designers to take a piece of fabric and make an amazing garment out of it," Green says.

In college, her teachers discovered that she had a sharp eye for fashion design and encouraged her to pursue a career in the industry.

She began working at Abraham & Strauss (now Macy's) as a sales associate and fashion buyer. Simultaneously, she worked on her master's in education at Stony Brook University in New York.

But when she found out Abraham & Strauss was paying her \$1,000 less than the men, she finished her degree and left. "The program was fun. It was interesting and challenging. I even met my first husband there," says Green, who is divorced.

In 1977, Green moved to Los Angeles to become a wardrobe stylist at May Companies. Again, she realized

that the fashion retail business was not her calling. She had a hard time justifying the long hours she was putting in.

"Sometimes you have to find something rewarding. It's not always about the money," Green says.

Her passion for helping others motivated her to enter the world of academia. "If someone has a need that I can fulfill — it's a wonderful thing," Green says.

Inside Goodwill's South of Market store, students in City College's advance image consulting course are giving underprivileged Bay Area residents — including homeless and disabled people — makeovers.

Green and City College instructor Kelly Armstrong assign groups of students to help clients improve their image and self-confidence. In turn, students learn that fashion can be more than skin deep.

It's all part of Image Update Makeovers, a program Green was instrumental in making a reality. The month-long project is part of Goodwill's transitional employment program and includes fashion personality assessments, body measurements, color analysis and a wardrobe plan.

For these individuals — rehabilitating from drug use, incarceration, homelessness and disabilities — a new image is a step toward a new life. "It transitions them from the hard life obstacles and gives them a new way to look at themselves," Armstrong says.

And it gives students a taste of the hard work required to succeed as fashion professionals. Green advises students to "treat every job, no matter how insignificant it may seem, as the most important job in the world."

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Models decked out in silver fashions walk the Macy's runway.

## Terrell Anderson

Two years after the murder of City College's basketball team captain, Terrell Anderson, no one has been arrested. Officially, the case is considered an "open and ongoing investigation." The San Francisco Police Department has not named any suspects, and although there were several witnesses, none have come forward.

Lt. John Murphy, head of homicide detail, declined to comment specifically on Terrell's case, but was quick to point out that investigations like these usually turn up evidence — just not enough to hold up in court. "Ninety percent of the time, we know who did it," he says.

But often times, witnesses are hesitant to testify for fear of reprisal. Mistrust of law enforcement in the poorer neighborhoods where these crimes tend to occur can prevent police from building a case. The lieutenant, a 26-year veteran, says it's rare when they find someone willing to testify in a murder trial.

As for Terrell's case, this much is known: Before sunrise on the morning of Dec. 26, 2005, a patron who had been kicked out of the Velvet Lounge returned to the North Beach club.

*"It's not as if they don't know who the killers are. They know."*

— CASSANDRA HUGHES

Police say he was looking for Terrell, who was among a large crowd of people outside. Shots were fired — four bullets struck Terrell in the head and face. No one else was hit.

When the police asked questions, bystanders refused to cooperate.

"Several people went home with his blood on their clothes," says Terrell's mother, Cassandra Hughes. "It took one second to undo a lifetime of nurturing."

Hughes isn't critical of the police investigation.

"It's not as if they don't know who the killers are," she says. "They know. The system has tied their hands."

She takes refuge in her faith, which she says gives her the strength to be "a survivor of violence, not a victim." It's also encouraged her to ignore the lust for revenge.

"I've grown to love him," she says of her son's murderer. "I forgive him. I'm looking forward to the day that I can sit down and ask him why."

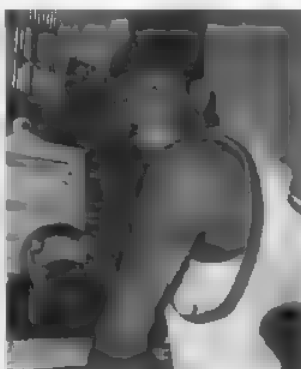


PHOTO COURTESY OF CASSANDRA HUGHES

## Fred Lau

The San Francisco Police Department's first Asian American police chief, Fred Lau, almost never made the force. The City College alum was an inch short of the 5-foot-8-inch height requirement when he applied for the department in 1970.

But he refused to accept what he saw as a discriminatory standard and fought the requirement through the Civil Services Commission.

"Just because I was shorter in stature didn't mean that I couldn't perform as well, or that I didn't care for our community," Lau says.

Lau measured himself several times a day. Someone told him he might be taller early in the morning. He spent months at the gym, hanging from a bar with weights fastened to his legs, just in case. Whatever it took to get that extra inch.

"When you want something that badly," he says, "you do everything you can to fulfill your dream."

The police commission stretched before Lau did. They blurred the height requirement in late 1970 and allowed him to join the force.

At 46, Lau became SFPD's first Asian American police chief. It made him the highest ranked officer of Asian descent in any major U.S. police department.

After six years as police chief, the 58-year-old transferred to the Transportation Security Administration, where he still works as the federal security director of Oakland, Stockton, Modesto and Sonoma airports.

Throughout his adult life, Lau has been deeply involved at City College.

Early in his career, he took classes in criminal justice. Once he became police chief, he began sharing his experiences with Asian American studies classes. He's even taken culinary arts courses here.

"City College was a place where we were encouraged to develop our self-esteem — to look beyond our expectations," Lau says.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SFPD

*When you want something that badly, you do everything you can to fulfill your dream.*

— FRED LAU



## O.J. Simpson

Once one of City College's most celebrated alumni, O.J. Simpson is back in court, this time facing nine felony counts, including two for assault with a deadly weapon.

During a sports memorabilia convention in Las Vegas in September, O.J. and a few of his golf buddies burst into a hotel room. O.J. thought collectibles dealer Alfred Beardsley was selling property that belonged to him.

According to news reports, they held up the dealer at gunpoint and left with goods stuffed in pillowcases.

Among the items that O.J. was said to have reclaimed were various photos and lithographs, his Hall of Fame certificate, and the suit he wore when he was acquitted of murder. O.J. told authorities that the items were stolen from him.

During pretrial hearings, his accomplices testified against him as part of a plea bargain. They indicated that guns were involved, and that O.J. had instructed them to carry "some heat" and "look menacing."

If convicted, O.J. could face life in prison. He's out on bail now, awaiting trial in April.

Like a moth attracted to light, O.J. has spent most of his adult life in the media spotlight.

He first drew attention at City College. By the time he left Rams Stadium, his teammates and coaches knew he was headed for greatness. He would go on to win the Heisman Trophy at USC and set an NFL rushing record. In 1985, he was inducted into the football Hall of Fame.

When his career tapered off, his need for attention did not. Between the infamous murder trial and his most recent arrest, controversy continued to surround O.J.

In 2006, Regan Books planned to publish his hypothetical account of how he might have murdered his ex-wife, Nicole Brown. Titled "If I Did It," the book was intended to be a sensational best-seller and a source of income for his family. It never made it to print under O.J.'s name.

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch quashed the book amid public outcry. A judge handed the publishing rights to the Ronald Goldman family and the Nicole Brown Estate. During the last 10 years, they had received only \$10,000 of the \$33.5 million that a judge had awarded them in trial for the wrongful deaths of Goldman and Brown.

The Goldman family released his book last fall. But

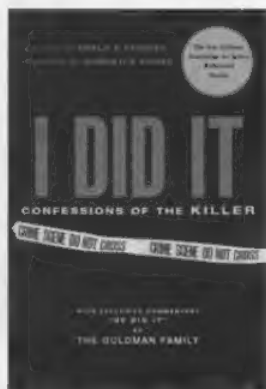


PHOTO COURTESY OF  
BEAUFORT BOOKS

*O.J. wondered  
how it had  
come to this.  
"I had been  
somebody."*

they redesigned the cover, downplaying the word "If" so that it would read: "I Did It: Confessions of a Killer."

As O.J. had once hoped, it became a national bestseller.

More than 200,000 copies broadcast his wonder at "how it had come to this. ... I had been somebody once."

## Henry Leff

Guests at the funeral of former City College broadcast department chair Henry Leff were asked to bring two things to his service: a sense of humor and an appetite.

His daughter Judi Leff eulogized that, for 88 years, the man who "fed us all with his talent and humor," also never forgot the "chocolate and cheese." Buffet tables filled with Leff's favorite foods — bagels, lox, sweets and a variety of cheeses — waited behind the pews.

Most of Leff's family and friends had already come to terms with his death. Few cried. The service was held two months later than expected. Leff died in August of natural causes, but his body had just returned from an Oregon classroom, where he taught his last lesson: human anatomy.

There was a time — an era, rather, 35 years long — when Leff taught every class on the broadcast department's schedule. "Henry pretty much was the department," said his successor and good friend, Phil Brown.

And, as Brown learned, the World War II veteran got used to having things his way. Leff demanded a lot from his students. Even today, some who never met him still learn from his old recordings, practicing on his intentionally tangled tape-editing exercises.

A star in the '50s hit radio series "Candy Matson," a KQED founding member and television actor, and a crack-up in Woody Allen's 1969 blockbuster "Take the Money and Run," Leff forewent a career in Hollywood to create a factory for broadcast talent at City College.

According to current department chair Francine Podenski, Henry had the tenacity to keep the department up to speed with the latest technologies. She says, "Henry was a man of considerable vision."



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
THE LEFF FAMILY

# A Letter from City College Chancellor Philip R. Day, Jr.



Chancellor Philip R. Day, Jr. will end his 10-year City College career at the end of spring semester. With his last day of work approaching, etc. magazine asked him to write a letter addressing the City College community about whatever was on his mind.

Recently I was interviewed by a journalist with the Chronicle of Higher Education, who was doing an article on the changing role of the community college presidency. She was particularly interested in why I was motivated to do the work that I do each day.

I told her that the diligence and persistence of our students amazes and inspires me every day. I also shared with her that serving as the chancellor and chief executive officer of City College of San Francisco has been the greatest professional challenge I have experienced during

my last 30 years as a CEO.

I also shared with her that being at CCSF has given me enormous satisfaction and pride as I have been able to work alongside a dynamic faculty, a strong administrative team and a dedicated classified staff who work each day to ensure that our students receive the very best education.

I also told her that with such creative, energetic and passionate people — people who bring diverse and rich perspectives to the work of education — CCSF is sure to remain as one of the very best community colleges in the country.

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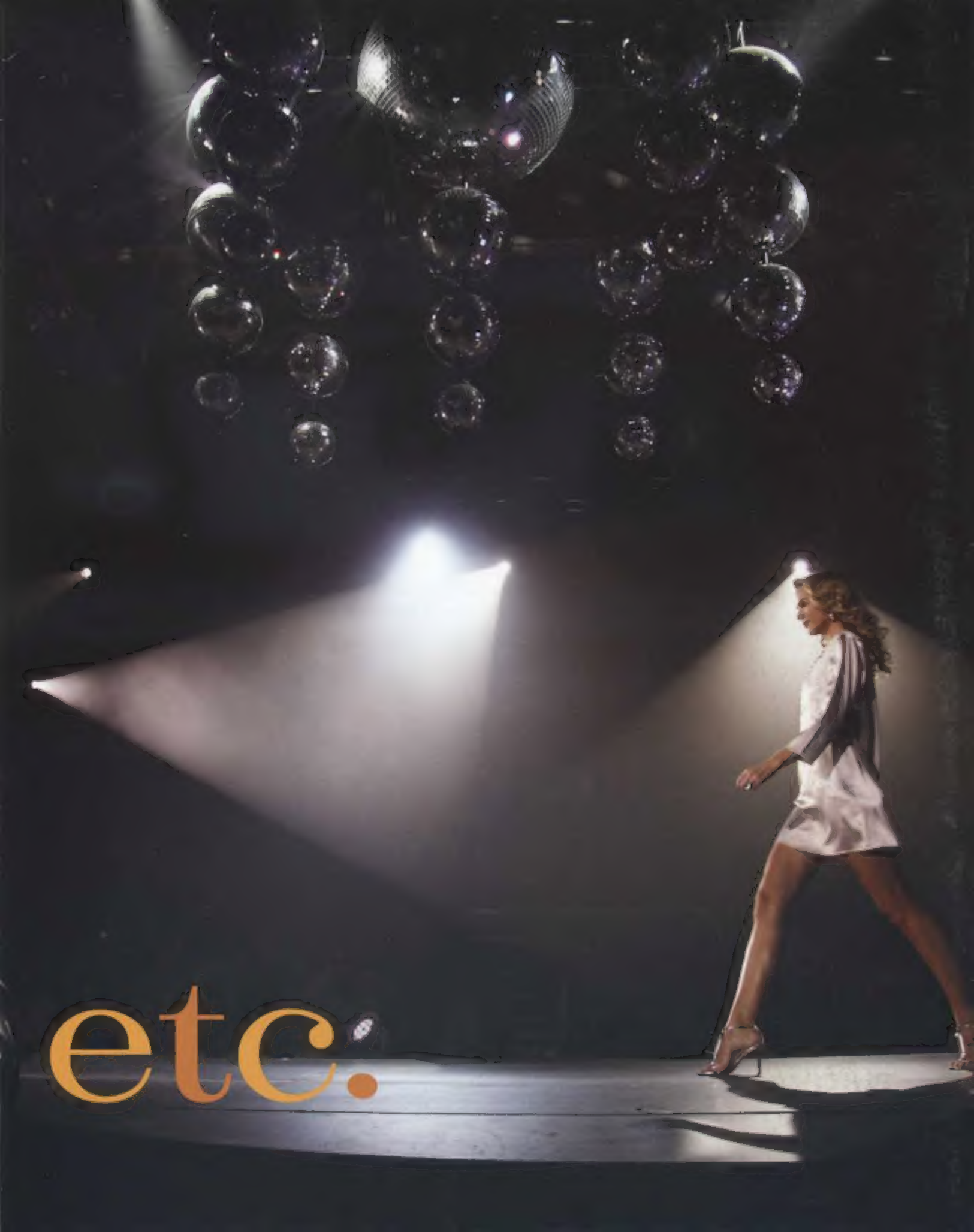


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